

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jorbagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated: 1st September, 2023

To
The Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Chhattisgarh,
Mahanadi Bhavan,
New Raipur (CG).

Sub: Proposal for diversion of additional 43.942 ha of forest land of Kusmunda OC Expansion project of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited for Coal Mining in Korba district of Chhattisgarh– reg.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Chhattisgarh's letter no. F-5-20/2023/10-2 dated 16.08.2023 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to say that after examination of said proposal the following are observed:

- i. The Ministry granted approval to 402.966 Ha of forest land on 20.04.2018 which is linked to the instant proposal. In this regard the State govt. is requested to provide the updated status of progress of compliance of the conditions stipulated in Stage-I approval letter.
- ii. Status of reclamation measures undertaken by the user agency in their lease area in case of earlier approvals as per the Progressive Mine Closure Plans and gaps if any, shall be intimated by the State Govt. Further, in case of instant proposal, the details of proposed reclamation/back-filled area at the end of mine life has not been given in the project report. The same needs clarification.
- iii. The State Govt. shall provide the details of safety zone of the mining leases (along with KML files) as per the para 7.9 of chapter 7 of Handbook of guidelines issued by this Ministry in 2019. Further, details of 1.5 times afforestation needs to be submitted along with complete detail of supporting attributes such as afforestation scheme, suitability certificate, KML files, etc.
- iv. The State Govt. shall provide the details of coal evacuation plan and involvement of forest land, if any, shall be intimated.
- v. The details of the validity of the entire mining lease along with detailed chronology of approvals of the mining lease shall be submitted.
- vi. As per the DSS analysis, Hadso river is flowing within buffer of proposed forest patches for which the provisions of embankment have been proposed by the State Govt. However, comments of the Water Resource Department on the proposed measures and impact of the project on the hydrological regimes in the area have not been submitted. The same requires submission. Further the State Govt. is requested to furnish its comments for the requirement of any Soil Moisture Conservation plan wrt the instant proposal and other proposals in this mining lease.
- vii. Site suitability certificates from the DCF concerned, certifying the suitability of Degraded-Forest Land for raising CA, have not been uploaded online. the same needs to be uploaded in PARIVESH portal.

- viii. Cost benefit analysis indicating the CB ratio of 1:40 has been submitted the same needs to be revisited and estimated using appropriate techno-economic tools for estimation of all parameters and their discounting to arrive at same values of cost and future benefits. Further, as per the CB ratio submitted it has been observed that for possession value of forest land diverted NPV is been taken for 30%. In this regard the State Govt. shall offer its comments.
- ix. Satellite imagery shows the presence of settlement, industrial structure (existing as well as fresh construction), agriculture land and road is visible within the mining lease. The requires clarification and justification that why this may not be considered as violation of FCA, 1980.
- x. Out of total 87.955 ha degraded forest land identified of compensatory afforestation, 43 ha of land is classified as moderately dense forest. The same need to be revisited by the State Government.

In view of above, the State Government is requested to submit information/documents as indicated above for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully
Sd/-

(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) Aranya Bhavan, Sector 19, North Block, New Raipur- 492002 Chhattisgarh.
2. DDGF(C) Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur.
3. IGF(C) Sub-Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Raipur
4. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Jail Road, Aranya Bhavan, Raipur.
5. User Agency
6. Monitoring Cell, Forest Conservation Division, MoEF&CC